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THE FALSE WIDOW; OR, FLORIEN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
Author of "Adria, the Adopted," "Strangely Wed," "Madame Durand's Protege."

CHAPTER I.

THE DESERT ISLE.

MID-OCEAN.

A sky like a canopy of pearl, with the sun hung like a burning globe against it. The sea glassily calm, with one tiny object dotting the watery waste.

A boat lay motionless upon the quiet ocean's breast. A torn rag of a sail hung limp at the mast, but not a puff of air stirred its tattered folds. The intense heat had beaten down until the seams of the little craft gaped wide; it was rudderless, utterly at the mercy of wind or wave.

During this dead calm, the brine of the ocean stole in at the opened cracks, and only constant bailing kept the boat afloat. It held two occupants—a man and a woman. The man lay in the bottom of the boat, with sunken wild eyes glaring about him, wailed now and again by the heavy lids when he would drift away in unconsciousness; his lips were swollen, purple and cracked, and a mutter or a groan broke over them as the agony he was enduring forced an utterance. The woman had suffered less, but famine was stamped on her features and looked out of her hollow eyes. She was on her knees, monotonously dipping out the rising flood, casting a glance now and then at her companion in distress, or searching the horizon for a sail.

For fourteen days and nights only those few planks had intervened between them and eternity; for half that time they had been without food or water, except once when a dead fish floated to the surface near them. The woman had secured it and torn it ravenously with her strong, white teeth;

but the man turned away from the portion she offered him with a shudder of disgust, and without proffering it a second time, she finished the last morsel. Later, his appetite might have overcome his fastidiousness, but not another scrap of even such questionable fare came to their view.

Stealthily increasing, the water crept in through the widening seams. The woman saw it with fear and despair, but never paused in her task of bailing out the boat.

"It's no use struggling," she said harshly, throwing a burning look toward the man. "There's not a sail to be seen, and we'll not keep afloat till night."

He made no answer, but moved painfully, looking up at the pitiless sky.

"It's certain death to us both, I suppose," she continued in a reckless tone. "If either escape, though, it will be me. Give me the papers, Alec; they'll do no one any good at the bottom of the ocean."

He thrust his hand into his breast, and as her words recalled a little of his strength, raised himself on one elbow, and glared a warning at her as she would have drawn nearer.

"Keep off!" he gasped, hoarsely. "As Heaven hears me I'll throw them into the sea first."

"They'll go there soon. It's no great matter, but I would regard your wishes if I got back, Alec. I've faced death since we started on this voyage, and I'd never risk the consequences now that I might have plotted for once."

Had he seen the cunning gleam in those downcast eyes, he would have been further assured of the insincerity of her words. It was replaced by the sullen dullness of despair.

as her thoughts reverted to their situation. She flung down the vessel she had used for bailing, and let her hands drop.

"We may as well die first as last. It's only an hour or two more at best."

With a cry the man rose up, with outstretched, quivering arm.

"Look, Mirette, look! An island in the sky!"

They both saw it, a long, low line of land, seemingly set in that canopy of dazzling blue. Their eyes turned upon the surrounding waters in eager expectation, but not so much as a straw met their searching gaze.

"An illusion—but the illusions of this life are nearly past for me," said Mirette, bitterly.

The other sunk back weak and trembling, but with a ray of hope flickering in his breast.

"I've heard of such things before," he said, panting. "I can't give an explanation of the phenomenon, but that was a reflection of a real island we have just seen. Oh, if we could but reach it, if there was any b-

As if invoked by his words, a breath of air ruffled the utter calm, and stirred the tattered sail. With hope renewed, the woman went to work again with feverish vigor clearing the fragile shell of the rising water.

Presently came another puff of air, and in half an hour a stiff breeze was blowing. Then a shadow rushed up as if from the very midst of the sea. It widened and darkened, the sky grew speedily overcast, the increasing stir of the waters broke them into waves, which ran momentarily higher. A sudden storm was racing into effect.

A short interval and then it broke upon them. The crazy boat rocked and dipped and seemed on the point of capsizing; it was driven before the wind, and beaten back by the waves. Mirette lowered the sail, which, inefficient at the best, was an added danger now.

The rain burst over them in a blinding sheet of a few minutes' duration, and then swept on eastward. The sea ran heavy and high; the boat plunged, creaking and straining, but breasted the waves still, though threatening destruction at any moment.

The man and woman had spread the sail with a depression in the center, and caught of the rain sufficient to relieve their insatiate thirst.

They had a life-preserver each, which fastened upon their persons, and prepared for a final encounter with the waves when the worst should come. The little bark drifted on, holding together beyond the utmost limits of their expectations.

"Look!" cried Mirette, with sudden sharpness. "Land, it's land!"

A long, low, dark line lay before them, and the boat drifted on toward it. Every energy was now devoted to keeping it afloat, and after what seemed an eternity, they were within plain sight of the shore.

The white-capped waves rolled high, but the absence of a continuous line left them nothing to apprehend from breakers. But now with safety in sight, the boat almost

ceased to advance, and settled speedily, despite their utmost efforts.

There were ears, which Mirette had tied together, and she had wrenched loose a spar after the destruction of the boat became a certainty. They cast these into the sea, and following, clung to them in the last desperate struggle for life. The wind rising again, gave token that the storm was not over. But before the rain broke down again they both had been washed ashore.

Their refuge proved to be an island which was little more than a sandbank. It was covered with a growth of rank, reed-like grass, but there was no other vegetation, which they accepted as proof that the island was at times quite submerged. There was no water, but for the immediate time they were supplied from the discharge of the clouds. Clams were washed up along the shore, which Mirette secured, and fed on voraciously. Alec rallied for a few hours, then sank into a profound sleep of utter exhaustion and awoke in a burning delirium. The packet of papers inclosed in a proof wrapping which he had guarded so faithfully were exposed now to the hand of the despoiler.

Mirette stole them from his bosom without one pang of conscience, and secured them upon her own person.

"He may die now if he likes," she whispered, fiercely. "The sooner he dies, if any rescue is to reach here. I am almost tempted to consign him an offering to the spirits of the deep."

The whispered thought was only the weight of empty words, for the desolation of that barren shore would have proved intolerable but for the germ of life lingering in his unconscious form, still sufficient to impart a sense of companionship. She bestowed little care upon him, but kept watch on the horizon in hope of succor.

It came sooner than she had dared to hope. On the second day, a sail appearing like a tiny speck grew steadily more distinct as the vessel bore straight down upon the little island. She had no means of raising a signal to attract the attention of the crew, but, sighting land, a boat was sent ashore in the hope of obtaining water.

Mirette met them upon the beach. Alec lay far back amid the reeds, in a heavy apathetic sleep, from which she told herself he would never awake.

In answer to the inquiries of the sailors she satisfied them that there was no water upon the little island, and, when they went back to the ship, she accompanied them with never a word of that other survivor of storm and wreck whose presence on that sandy shore they did not suspect.

CHAPTER II.

FLOREN.

Miss DEBORAH GRAY, stiff, tall and gaunt, as she always appeared, had never seemed stiffer, taller, more gaunt and forbidding than she did one bright Spring morning as she stood in the shadow just beyond the flood of sunshine which streamed in over the bare white kitchen floor.

It seemed a studied principle of Miss De-

borah never to receive any thing from the joyous brightness, which is like healthful elixir to more versatile natures, so she seemed always to be surrounded by an impalpable gray shadow, which detracted nothing from her sharp angles of form and feature, and lent no softening influence to her hard expression. She held an open letter in her hand. The visible lines in her forehead had deepened and closed in a corrugated knot of wrinkles, her thin lips were compressed, and her eyes of light gray grown colder—if that were possible—than their accustomed wont.

Her hand closed upon and crumpled the written sheet, which she thrust hastily behind her, as a young girl came, with a springy step, up the garden path, and flashed across the stream of yellow sunlight—herself an incarnation of a glorious brightness, which was all the more attractive because it was apparent as a promise quite as much as in reality. Just now there was an unusual flush on the round, sunbrowned cheeks, a sparkle of excitement glinting in her eyes, which were of the dark hazel which verges upon brown. She walked straight up to confront Miss Deborah with her bright young face mingling impetuosity with defiance, and her clear voice ringing with a sense of indignity put upon her.

"You needn't try to hide it from me, aunt Deborah," said she. "I know you have got a letter from abroad, though you are so anxious to hide the fact from me. You had another one a month ago, and never breathed of it. I want to know why you didn't deliver the message it contained?"

Deborah Gray stood stiff as a poker, still keeping the letter at her back, regarding the girl with a stern silence, which was meant to awe her into more submissive deportment. Whatever the customary effect of that unwavering gaze may have been, it failed signally in accomplishing its object now.

"You needn't try to stare me down, aunt Deb," said she, with scornful accent. "I'll not be put down, I tell you. I'll find out what's in the letter you hold there as sure as I'm here, and you'll deliver what messages have been addressed to me, or I'll let it be known about the breach of faith you are guilty of. Shame on you, who profess to be a Christian. In my opinion you've been truly guilty of stealing as was little Jacky Wyllie, who was caught taking potatoes from our cellar last winter; you were severe enough on him, though it was proved actual hunger drove him to the deed. You have no such good excuse to account for your action."

"Florry! how dare you speak in that manner to me?" exclaimed Miss Gray. "Go to your room, and don't come down again until you are prepared to conduct yourself in a more exemplary manner."

"I will not go to my room, aunt Deb, and I will know the contents of that letter before I budge from this spot. Will you let me see it?"

Her tone was of command, not entreaty. Miss Gray looked grimly and sternly down

at the rebellious girl, who neither flinched nor abated zeal in her declared purpose.

"Will you let me see it?" she demanded again.

"Really, Florry—" began her aunt, unwilling to yield the point. But with a cat-like spring, Florry darted past her and clutched at the letter, but Deborah was too quick for her, holding it up far out of her reach.

Florry's little foot came down upon the floor with a resounding stamp.

"Give it to me, I say."

"Florry!" The single exclamation was a marvel of frigid severity as it dropped from Miss Deb's lips. Her skinny hand descended upon the shoulder of the excited little fury, whose eyes were flaming with the red, red blaze of anger. Florry wrench'd herself away, and sunk, sullenly, into one of the kitchen chairs. She would not continue a struggle where inequally existed to her own unconquerable disadvantage.

"My ungrateful child! Is this the return for all my care of you? It is well that I carry the conviction of duty faithfully performed in my bosom, and the peace which is the unfailing reward for it. Your wicked passion can harm no one but yourself. How can you reconcile such outrageous conduct with the precepts I have endeavored to instill into your mind. 'Better is he who ruleth his spirit—'"

"Aunt Deb, you shall not quote Scripture to me. I know I'm a great sinner—you've told me so often enough—and I don't know that I care to be any thing else. If you sermonize, I shall go straight out of this door, and not come back until I have seen Judge Lessingham, and discover if there is not some means to force a regard of my rights."

"If you move a step you shall not know from my lips," cried aunt Deb, angrily. "You don't deserve to be told any thing, and you should know I had good enough reason to spare you the knowledge of that other letter. I should have told you all about them both before this time but for your inexcusable behavior. Now, tell me, how do you know that any message was sent to you?"

Florry hung her head and her cheeks tinged; then her neck straightened proudly, and her gaze was unabashed and fearless as ever.

"Mr. Walter Lynne brought it from the office and left it in passing," said she. "The envelope was one of those transparent white kind, and some of the writing showed quite plainly through it. The foreign post-mark attracted his eye, and without meaning it he read some fragmentary lines, but not enough to understand the import of a single sentence. One was—'Tell my little Florry—another—love my dear!' Oh! Aunt Deb, why have you never told me that papa remembers and loves me?"

The full lips grew tremulous, but the angry amazement depicted in her aunt's face kept Florry's resentful spirit still in the ascendant.

"Florry! have you been meeting that man?"

"Aunt Deborah, I have been meeting that man."

"After my warnings! after my commands! Oh, what a bitter, thankless task I undertook when I accepted you into my charge."

There was a malicious gleam in Florry's eyes, and without doubt at any other time she would have proved herself recalcitrant and tantalizing, but now her object in view was too serious to be hazarded for a trifle.

"You didn't give me time to say that it was purely by accident," she resumed. "I have obeyed you on that point if I never do on any other. You might know that I or I would have understood your treachery before this time."

"I will not permit you to use such language in addressing me. You will be sorry for it and justify me when you come to know my motives. Here is the letter you were demanding just now to see."

Florry reached for it eagerly—a thin, rustling sheet written in a sloping feminine hand. Her hand fell as she saw that, and that the paper was edged with black. The color went out of her expressive face, leaving it ashen and still.

"Is papa dead?" she asked, in a subdued tone.

"Yes, he's dead"—in a voice which was hard and bitter.

Florry looked at her with tearless, reproachful eyes.

"Can't you forgive him now that he is dead?" she asked.

"How could I pray 'forgive us our trespasses' if I had not forgiven him? I forgive, but I never forgot."

Self-deluding sophistry! Deborah Gray thought she meant just what she said, but she should have known that true forgiveness consists in forgetting the injury.

"Poor papa!" sighed the girl. "You never let me know much about him, aunt Deb, but I shall never forget how grand and noble he looked the one time I can remember seeing him. I never can believe that he was a deliberately-wicked man."

Miss Gray's lips compressed.

"You'll be apt to think him a deliberately-inconsiderate one, then?" Though not often delicate spoken, she paused to cast about for a mild term which might not shock the orphan's heart at the moment when all her tenderest associations should throb to remembrance. "That other letter was the announcement of his marriage with a French girl, he ran across out there in Sydney. The message he sent you was just this—'Tell my little Florry that I hope she may sometime learn to love my dear wife in the place of the mother she never knew.' He spoke, but indefinitely, of coming home, and I thought, there was no occasion for you to know yet. Think of a brazen, Frenchy thing, after my sister Winnifred!"

That last expression gave Florry an insight of the true impulse which had prompted her aunt to withhold the news. Her sister, Winnifred, had been her idol. The two had been alone in the world, and all in all to each other until Winnifred married against the elder sister's will. Hubert Redesdale had just graduated, was reckless and impulsive as the wildest college student, and Deborah Gray never paused to distinguish gradations between total moral depravity and youthful follies. The marriage did not prove a happy one. The couple were ill-assorted as a couple well could be, and one of the violent disagreements which came to be a part of their daily life ended in the young wife returning to her sister's home, which Redesdale made no effort to induce her to leave again. In reality he had been harshly judged. Winnifred was a selfish doll of a woman who had no sympathy in accordance with

him, and was always setting her narrow views against his opinions and wishes. She died of a pulmonary disease when Florry was in her babyhood, but her sister Deborah accused Hubert Redesdale of blighting her life and breaking her heart.

"That letter is from your father's new wife," continued Miss Gray, in her hard, dry voice. "She says they had made all their arrangements for a return to the States, but a week before the vessel was to sail he was taken with yellow fever and died in three days time. She intended to come on all the same, so we may look for her now at any time. Read the letter and see what you think of the prospect."

Thus reminded, Florry perused the insive—formal and cleverly worded, but dictatorial in style, and where grief was expressed, diffuse to insincerity. One paragraph the girl fingered over.

"My husband left a considerable fortune which he accumulated during the dozen years he remained in Australia. The bulk of it was conveyed sometime before our marriage to a responsible man. New York, our house, and his will, drawn and witnessed here, were forwarded at the same time to the keeping of the head of the firm. It leaves that entire portion to his daughter Florien, but he made liberal provision for me from later accumulations."

The business-like details seemed out of place in this first announcement of her grief, written so soon after her bereavement. It went on to state that the girl should be sent to some suitable school, as the writer had been led to believe her education was not of a kind to suit the position the school would hereafter occupy. Florry's wayward heart rebelled. What right had this stranger, a woman whom she had never seen, whom she felt intuitively she could neither love nor trust, to assert control over her?

"I'll not be disposed of in any such way," she declared, indignantly. "She will be your personal guardian until you are of age," said Miss Deborah, grimly. "She can do as she likes with you."

"She shall let me alone to do as I like, or she'll find her guardianship any thing but a pleasant undertaking," declared fiery Florry.

Miss Deborah opened her lips as if to utter a reproof, but closed them again without having spoken. For once Florry's waywardness received no check since it was directed against a cause which was a bitter cross to her spinster aunt.

The girl went slowly out of the wide kitchen, which was a model of cleanly neatness, and climbed the steps leading to her attic room. There were a couple of dormer windows set in the sloping roof; the room was wide and low, with a strip of bright rag-carpet covering the center of the floor. At the sides it was bare but scoured daubily white. There was a bed, a chair, and a rickety washstand; a little worn trunk; and a little round mirror hung upon the wall. A few dresses hung upon pegs in one corner, and there was a miscellaneous pile of pamphlets, books and papers, on a shelf.

Florry sat upon the worn little trunk, resting her chin upon her hand, thinking of the sad of the father, evidences of whose love or care she had never experienced.

There seemed a weight upon her heart, a vague, dull pain, unlike a grief brought forcibly home to her by the death of one she had known familiarly. A little moisture dimmed her eyes, but, unlike those of many girls, Florry was seldom moved to tears. Her capacity for joy or suffering was great, but a deep emotion always left her subdued and silent.

Growing up as she had done beneath Miss Deborah's shadow, she had not failed to notice her bitter enmity toward Hubert Redesdale, though the spinster always referred to him as "unusually so upon this very subject." It may have been this very bitterness which enlisted Florry in warm sympathy on her father's side; certainly it was through no clearer understanding of the truth than she gathered from studying the pretty simpering face which hung over the mantel in Miss Deborah's room. Florry never looked at the pictured face without being glad that she in no way resembled it.

Hours passed while she sat there thinking mournfully of her father's fate, and realizing something of what she had lost through never knowing him. But Florry's nature was one of those strange compounds which will leap at once from one extreme of feeling to the very opposite; so now she flushed again with indignant anger as she gathered together her precious letters and tied them securely with a scarlet ribbon which had been twined in her short brown locks.

"How dare aunt Deb preach duty or gratitude to me?" she asked herself, passionately. "I'm sure I don't owe her much for her care of me, nor for her example of honesty, whatever her precepts may have been. She has always treated me as though I were a baby, with neither judgment nor common sense, but I'll not be led blindfold by her or any one hereafter. If that woman dares attempt to control me against my will, I'll find so many ways to torment her that she'll be glad to let me take my own course, if it does lead me down to destruction, as aunt Deb will be apt to declare."

So absorbed was she that she did not hear a step across the sands, which lay bare and dry now. A young man taking a short cut by the bluff from the hotel, a mile up the shore, had espied her perched there in the cranny amid the cliffs. He took a nonchalant, leisurely survey of the little figure swayed by the force of her tempestuous feelings, and with a sweep of his eye assured himself that he had no cause to fear the intrusion of a third party. Then with a few swift strides he cleared the space between them, and she started up with a wavering of the color in the bright cheeks as she found him suddenly at her side.

"What am I to infer from that Lucrezia Borgia look I surprised upon your face?" he asked, flippantly. "One would think you meditated dire revenge upon your worst enemy."

"Not so bad as that, Mr. Lynne. I am only studying by what means I can circumvent my enemy."

Some shade differing from her usual frank outspokenness impressed him, and he asked with quick concern:

"What is the matter, Florry? Has any thing occurred to distress you?"

His tender tone penetrated to the girl's sore heart. The poor child had experienced little enough of delicate treatment since she could first remember, and beneath her impulsive waywardness she carried a high-strung, sensitive organization that found relief now in his sympathetic presence. He thought that she had never looked so pretty as at that moment, with the grievous shade clouding her face, her fresh lips apart and quivering, and her hazel eyes grown deep and dark with the softening force of her emotion. Walter Lynne was fastidious to the last degree on some points, and though neither a strong nor a pure-minded man, he had placed his standard of womanhood on a pedestal which he was not blind enough to believe that Florry had reached, but he had sufficient foresight to discern that she would attain it in the future, when the capricious waywardness of the girl should merge into the earnest experience of the woman.

Florry, come back!" cried her aunt.

But Florry, never heeding, perhaps not hearing, sped straight on until the flutter of her light garments was shut from sight by the trees which fringed the lane.

CHAPTER III.

AT MIDNIGHT.

Florry neither paused nor swerved aside from a straight course until she rushed across the strip of level sandy beach that Jersey shore, and, sure of foot, skimmed over the slippery rocks which the outgoing tide left bare, while the crevices between were channels that would not be drained for a half-hour yet.

By the roundabout course of the rocks she reached the bluffs a quarter of a mile away from the strip of even beach. She flung herself down in a cranny where an overhanging rock screened her from the

chance of observation from above, and let the misses she had clutched so tightly all the way shower down in an irregular heap at her side, while her grieved and angered heart swelled in painful throbs which shook her frame like suppressed sobbing. She clenched her hands and set her teeth together until she had mastered the passion assailing her.

"Oh, papa! poor, poor papa!" she cried, letting her head drop into the support of her clasped hands; and, as though a little of her burden had escaped in that regretful cry, she composed herself to examine the letters, the first of which had lain in waiting for her for twelve long years.

Long, loving letters they were, which gave her an insight into the strong unrest, the unsatisfied craving, which had made her father a voluntary exile from his home and friends. He had never forgotten her, as stern aunt Deb had permitted her to think. Her eyes grew soft and humid with unshed tears of tenderness as she observed the date of each yearly letter, and knew they had been intended to reach her on her birthdays. Some of the later ones seemed to breathe a reproach that she never responded to his messages of affection, but the last one of all touched her as none of the others had done. A paragraph ran:

"And now, my daughter, I have found a sense of restful peace and a new interest in life which I never expected to hold. I have been a lonely man, trying to drown my discontent in constant employment, or when that failed, throwing myself heart and soul into some adventurous mission which can always be found in a good cause in this wild Australia. In an expedition of this kind, a few months ago, we were attacked by bush-rangers, and only succeeded in beating them off after a tough struggle and the loss of half our number. I was taken into custody and sold, with others in the same plight, and carried back to Sydney. One of the men was a French companion named Draveau, with whom I had a standing acquaintance, and it was in endeavoring to rescue him I received my severest wound. At the solicitation of his sister, who learned the facts, I was conveyed directly to the residence he had occupied, and the grateful, noble woman nursed me back to strength and health against odds which seemed at first insurmountable. I can not hope to impress you, my daughter, with any clear understanding of the man's character, but I have a strong suspicion that he was a scoundrel, a scoundrel who had openly given her, felt herself grow bitterly indignant at the woman who had written that cold, calculating letter immediately after his death.

"He loved her so," she thought, "but before the grave closed over him she was counting the advantages her position as his widow would afford her. Oh, how vilely she must have deceived him! He thought her an angel, but I know she must be the arch-hypocrite a woman may become to have so imposed upon him. Who knows but I will be a happier man than in all my life yet when she becomes my wife, as she has promised to do. Can I hope that my little girl will be glad for her father's sake, until I can bring my two loved ones together, as I hope to do some day? I have told Mirette of the daughter I have not seen for twelve long years, and she is prepared to receive you with open arms and heart."

There was much more in the same strain; and Florry, loving her father's memory the more for these confidences he had so openly given her, felt herself grow bitterly indignant at the woman who had written that cold, calculating letter immediately after his death.

"He loved her so," she thought, "but before the grave closed over him she was counting the advantages her position as his widow would afford her. Oh, how vilely she must have deceived him! He thought her an angel, but I know she must be the arch-hypocrite a woman may become to have so imposed upon him. Who knows but I will be a happier man than in all my life yet when she becomes my wife, as she has promised to do. Can I hope that my little girl will be glad for her father's sake, until I can bring my two loved ones together, as I hope to do some day? I have told Mirette of the daughter I have not seen for twelve long years, and she is prepared to receive you with open arms and heart."

"I won't go," asserted Florry, defiantly; "I'll not be packed out of her way like a piece of troublesome furniture. That's all she wants, I know, to be rid of me."

"Then you will stay as you are?" he queried.

"With aunt Deb, after that?" she pointed to the letters. "No, indeed! Oh, Walter, what shall I do? If any one can find some way for me out of it, all you."

Her pretty, appealing face and innocent trust of him were not without their effect upon her companion. Half in love with her as he had been for weeks past—he had made love to her in a negative way, which seemed very positive to her while it did not commit him—at this moment he believed he could forget worldly caution and his own ambitions aims for the sake of molding her into the glorious creature she was destined to become. With this feeling strong upon him, he expressed himself unguardedly.

"I think I could, little darling." Then, in an attempt to laugh off the impression his tender tone conveyed—"That is, if that true little heart of yours could beat out gold as well as loyal feeling. If I were not poor, Florry, you should not be left to the mercy of another guardianship if you would accept mine."

Her startled eyes fixed full upon him, and her color coming and going in vivid waves, showed how far her intent had been from realizing this half-confession. But she had such implicit faith in him that when he had spoken she accepted his meaning frankly, as she believed he intended it. The remembrance of her changed position, of the wealth which would be hers, was recalled by his words.

"What if I should be so, Walter? What if I really carry gold along with me?"

"Can you ask, Florry? But I then I wouldn't dare speak of the hope I have been looking forward to as a beacon-light. Oh, if I could in justice to my both, ask you to be my wife now! But my income is of the narrowest, and—isn't it a shame for a man of my age and opportunities to say?—I believe if I had no resource but actual labor which I have knowledge to perform, I would starve. How can I ask you to share a fate like that?"

For once the man was sincere in all he said. He felt that she of all women was the one who could raise him from the mean intricacies of the life he now pursued. He had a piece of sterile property somewhere, so secured that he could not throw it out of his hands, which brought him an annual dole that was no more than a drop in the bucket of one of his prodigies. It is doubtful if he himself knew how he kept up appearances. He dabbled a little in stocks when he could secure a surplus; he had a far-off relative who advanced him sparing sums occasionally, and on whose will he built up a mountain of bright expectation; he had hosts of friends from whom he never scrupled to receive pecuniary benefit; and behind these he had nothing more stable than "his luck" to depend upon, and that luck ran so well in his favor that the gaming-table and betting books were mostly accountable for the sums that went slipping through his fingers as though some modern Crescens stood prepared to keep him upon his feet.

He was Florry's hero just now, and she made of him an idol without a flaw.

"But I am not poor, now, Walter," she broke out, eagerly. "I am to be sent away to get varnished and veneered against my appearance when madame's term of mourning shall be over. Don't let me fall into her hands, will you?"

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"What am I to infer from that Lucrezia Borgia look I surprised upon your face?" he asked, flippantly. "One would think you meditated dire revenge upon your worst enemy."

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Some shade differing from her usual frank outspokenness impressed him, and he asked with quick concern:

"What is the matter, Florry? Has any thing occurred to distress you?"

His tender tone penetrated to the girl's sore heart. The poor child had experienced little enough of delicate treatment since she could first remember, and beneath her impulsive waywardness she carried a high-strung, sensitive organization that found relief now in his sympathetic presence. He thought that she had never looked so pretty as at that moment, with the grievous shade clouding her face, her fresh lips apart and quivering, and her hazel eyes grown deep and dark with the softening force of her emotion. Walter Lynne was fastidious to the last degree on some points, and though neither a strong nor a pure-minded man, he had placed his standard of womanhood on a pedestal which he was not blind enough to believe that Florry had reached, but he had

THE GUILELESS HEART.

BY GERALD SILVEY.

The blush upon thy cheek is charming,
Fair as morn's first blushing light;
And thy eyes are glowing,
Than cornelian skies, and bright.

But, cheeks! soft glow, and eyes wild beaming.

Never were my soul's delight.

Nay! 'twas not thy ardent beauty,

That first won my loving heart;

Not thy charms, which beamed divinely,

Bade my sleeping passions start;

For the pleasure then that thrilled me,

No outward beauty could impart.

Why is it, then, gentle presence,

That lasting isle, where beams the beams,

What is it, Love's radiant altar,

Tends the flame with angel art?

Harken, maiden, I will tell you:

Thy trusting, guileless heart!

The Rock Rider:

THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA.

TALE OF THE THREE PARKS.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.

AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJAH," "THE KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "DOUBLE-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FLAG OF TRUE.

NIGHT brooded over the valley of the South Park, and all the dark greenward was alive with twinkling watch-fires, around which the warriors of three great tribes, the Comanches, the Apaches and the Cheyennes, were standing, sitting and lying.

At the mouth of the pass, clustered behind the white tents of their wagons, the remnant of the soldiers were sullenly gathered, cheerless and fireless, without a drop of water in camp, save what remained in their canteens from the morning's filling, a scanty supply at best.

The Indians seemed to have settled down to a regular siege, every avenue of escape being closed up by their grim circle of fires, but no further attacks being made. The warriors had suffered too heavily for their rash charges to be disposed to repeat them yet.

The soldiers, on the other hand, were silent and dispirited. All their animals had been killed or stampeded, and they had no resources but to defend themselves behind the corral of wagons till help arrived, if ever help came.

In the midst of the corral a group of officers was gathered, talking over the prospect before them in low tones.

"We have plenty of ammunition, major," said one, in reply to a question from a gray-headed officer, who seemed to be the commander, "but the men to use it are not so plentiful. We have too many recruits, and half of them are down sick or wounded since this morning. That Cochise must have had spies out who knew all our weakness, or the devils would never have dared to attack such a force as we have."

"How many men can you report for duty, then?" asked the major, a little crossly. "Don't theorize about Cochise, but tell me how many men I can depend on to cut through their line?"

"Not more than seventy, sir, and half of them are green hands."

"Green, or not? we must make the attempt at daybreak," said Major Morris, firmly. "If we had horses or water I would send to Denver for help. As it is, we must cut our way through and spike the guns, so that the Indians can't use them."

"Allow me to suggest a better method, major," said another officer. "We have proved that the Indians dare not attack us while we stick together. Our fire is too heavy. Why not take the guns with us, and move down to one of those pools to-night? The men are choking with thirst and desperate. We have nothing left to lose, and every thing to gain. The moral effect on the Indians must be incalculable, if we move boldly and surprise them. They think we are disheartened at the death of the ladies—"

"Hush, Taylor, hush! don't mention them," said the major, shuddering. "It's a fearful disgrace to five companies of United States troops that we should have let those devils carry off the General's wife and daughters, without being able to fire a shot to save them. It has near broken my heart, and I shall demand a court-martial and resign if I ever get out of this scrape alive."

"Crack! went a rifle from under the wheel of a wagon, the place where the sentries were posted, and all the officers were on the alert in moment, while the men jumped upon all sides from where they lay dozing.

"Who fired that shot?" demanded the major, sternly, as every thing still remained quiet outside.

The Indians did not appear to have noticed it.

"I fired, sir," responded a voice from under the wagon. "There's three Injuns a-comin' this way a-horseback, and I've stopped 'em."

"Don't fire again till I tell you," said the major. "I want to see them."

He went down between the wagons, and peered out. The forms of three horsemen were distinctly visible, standing out black against the firelight; and the center one bore a square white flag on his lance.

"A flag of truce, by Heavens!" exclaimed the major. "We must not be the first to disgrace it, gentlemen. Let us hear what they have to say. Boys, keep your eyes skinned all round. This may be only an Indian trick after all. I am going to hear their message."

Unfolding his white handkerchief, and displaying it for a counter-flag, the major advanced from the shelter of the wagons a few paces, when he halted and signaled the others to advance.

A number of Indians could be now seen standing by the fires, watching the advance of their envoys with apparent interest, and the fires, brightly blazing all round, made it a matter of difficulty for any one to cross the open ground without being seen.

At thirty paces distant one of the Indian envoys stuck his flag into the ground, dismounted, and advanced to meet the major.

He proved to be a magnificent chief, with scarlet plumes in his hair, dressed in the extreme of Indian dandyism, and heavily armed—no other than our friend, Red Lightning, with his left shoulder freshly bandaged from the wound of Buford's sword.

He executed a smart military salute to the major, for Red Lightning was proud of his proficiency in white customs, and then observed:

"How do, white chief?"

"Badly," said the major, sternly. Being

an old army officer, he knew all the prominent chiefs by sight, and recognized the other. "Very badly, Red Lightning. The Great Father has treated you and Cochise well. What are you doing here to-day, then, killing his children? I myself saw rifles and powder issued to you not six weeks ago, and now you use them on us. Where is Cochise, the Apache chief? He is with you here, too."

"Cochise is here," said a deep voice; and one of the Indians dismounted and came forward.

Like Red Lightning, though only of medium stature, his chest was enormous, and he seemed to be possessed of unbounded strength. The expression of his face was that of ferocious, brutal insolence, which he cared not to conceal; and his weapons were more numerous, if possible, than those of Red Lightning. Such was the infamous Apache chief, Cochise, noted for more than a hundred cold-blooded murders.

"What does the white chief want with Cochise?" he demanded, sneeringly. "Men seldom call him twice."

"What do you mean, Cochise, by attacking us in this manner?" asked the officer, putting a bold face on matters to deceive the Indian. "Are you not ashamed to break your treaties? You will get no more rifles and blankets from the Great Father, when he hears of this."

"Bah! Squaws talk. Men kill," said Cochise, roughly. "Much powder, plenty rifle, in train. Cochise take mif for three, seven year. Go on war-path. Den make peace with Great Father when tired and hungry. Good."

The cool audacity of the savage took the other aback for a moment, but Red Lightning addressed the third Indian in the rear, saying:

"Keche-ah-que-kono, chief of the Cheyennes, come forward and tell the white chief what we want."

The third Indian turned his horse loose and came forward, a gray-headed chief, of dignified mien, who spoke English pretty well. He saluted the major as politely as Red Lightning had done, and the officer observed:

"I little thought to see you here, too, Keche. You'll be sorry for it."

"Maybe I may not be sorry, major," said Keche, quietly. "We got you here so you never get out, and we got two little white squaws, too, that belong to the General. What you say to dat, major?"

"Gracious God, Keche! Are they yet alive?" demanded the major, excitedly.

"We thought surely they were all scalped when you took them."

"One was, major," said Keche, coolly.

"I got up in time to git two odders. We had 'em safe, and now we want to trade 'em!"

"Thank God, Keche, you're not as bad as dierest," said the major, fervently. "What do you want for them, man? I'll give you each a barrel of powder when you come to the fort, and fifty blankets."

"No go," interrupted Cochise, coarsely.

"No go, white chief much mean; not worth a curse."

What little English Cochise understood, will be perceived, had not been learned on Fifth avenue.

Major Morris colored deeply with vexation at the chief's insolence, but he contained himself, as many another gallant officer has been forced to in a similarly helpless position.

"Keche," he said to the Cheyenne, "tell me then how much you want to restore General Davis' daughters back to my care unharmed?"

"Keche-ah-que-kono smiled in a benevolent manner. His face bore a strong resemblance to that of the great Henry Ward Beecher in his saintliest mood, as the Cheyenne chief softly observed:

"White Father very rich. Got plenty guns, plenty powder, plenty wagons. White chief give up all his guns and wagons. Then Injuns give back the two white girls."

"What! Give up the very train I was ordered to escort to Fort Steedman?" said the major, excitedly.

"Keche, you must think I'm a coward to make such a proposal to me. Give up my train indeed!"

"Dat not all," said Keche, quietly. "You got to leave train anyhow. We have him safe to-morrow. We want all the guns your men have got, big gun, little gun and powder. You pile your arms. We give up squaws, and take you back where come from."

"In fact," said the major, angrily, "you ask an unconditional surrender of all my force. Well, sir, you won't get it. I could not face my General again, if I ever did such thing. You can go back, sir. If I tell my men your proposition they'll fire on you now."

"Maybe so they not fire," said the Cheyenne, coolly. "You get shot yourself first, major. We go back. You think better of me to-morrow morning. We bring little squaws down to see you. If so, you give up all, we send you back. If not, you dink?"

Without another word the Cheyenne chief turned on his heel and stalked to his horse. Cochise laughed brutally, and observed:

"Little white squaw nice. Warriors like 'em. Ugh!"

Then he too stalked away, and Red Lightning said, very earnestly:

"You do what Keche say, major. We like white chief, but must have big guns to fight soldiers. Good-night."

He saluted very politely, and turned away. Major Morris returned to his men.

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

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THE WINTER ROSES.

BY HARRY J. ROLT.

The winter roses sweetly bloom
At the window in my room;
Filling all the heated air
With their fragrance soft and rare.
As the chilling snow comes down
On the house-tops like a crown,
And the frost, the crystal rain
Borders every window-pane,
I then see but little room,
Where the roses for me bloom—
Where the golden sunshine plays
Through the short and wintry days.
Thus should ever blush and glow
Through the frost and through the snow,
Through the rime and mold of art,
The balmy roses of the heart.
The winter roses! Let them bloom,
Gentle maiden, in your room;
Mother, Sister, Friend and Wife,
Let them bloom throughout your life.

A Strange Girl: A NEW ENGLAND LOVE STORY.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND
KIT," "RED MAZELPA," "ACE OF SPADES,"
"HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF
NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LYDIA'S SECRET.

In a little, low one-story cottage in the outskirts of Saco, on the Portland road, dwelt Dinah Salisbury; Aunty Dinah, as she was known far and wide.

Our readers will remember her as the colored woman with the "yaller" dog who rescued Lydia Grame from her snowy shroud in the streets of Boston, as related in our first chapter.

Aunty Dinah made a comfortable living as a washerwoman, and the careful housewives of the twin cities praised her skill highly.

The old woman, her daily toil done, had just sat down to enjoy a cup of tea, when the dog, who had been quietly reposing on the hearth in front of the stove, raised his head, looked toward the door, and by his actions indicated as plainly as by words, that some one was coming.

"Somebody comin' eh?" the old woman questioned, rising from her seat. The dog wagged his tail at the sound of his mistress' voice.

"It's somebody that the dog knows for sure, or he'd done bark long ago," the old woman said, reflectively.

Then there came a gentle tap at the door. The old aunty opened it and Lydia Grame entered.

"Bress de Lord!" the old woman cried, in delight; "why, chile, is dat you?"

And the dog rose from his place by the hearth and came up to Lydia, wagging his tail in token of amity.

The girl was dressed plainly; a dark waterproof cloak covered her form from head to foot, and she wore a light chip hat, sailor-fashion.

"I thought that I would come and see you, aunty," Lydia said, and there was a troubled expression upon her beautiful face as she spoke.

"Dat's right, chile; Ise glad dat you hain't forgotten yer old aunty."

"I have too few friends to forget any of them," the girl spoke sadly.

"Lor, honey, ye musn't speak dat way!" rejoined the old woman, caressingly. "You's got more friends dan any oder gal dat works in de mill. Everybody likes you, chile. But, I specks you's in trouble, honey; yer don't look well. Jis' sit down an' take a cup of tea an' tell yer ole aunty wata's de matter wid ye."

And the old woman, bustling about the room, placed a chair for the girl at the table. Lydia sat down, first removing her cloak and hat. It was plain from the expression upon the girl's features that she was much troubled.

"I've had supper, aunty," she said, as the old woman poured out a cup of tea for her.

"Nebber mind dat, chile; jis' you drink a cup of yer aunty's tea. Yer don't git such tea as dat everyday, an' jes' try a bit of dat toast. See how glad dat fool dog is to see you! I nebber see'd any ting like dat afore." And the old woman laughed heartily as she beheld the dog frisking around the visitor, eager to receive a friendly word from her.

"Poor doggie," Lydia said, patting the dog's shaggy head with her soft, white hand. The dumb brute's joy at seeing her made the heart of the girl less wretched. The cold touch of the animal's nose rubbing against her hand seemed full of sympathy.

"Now, honey, jes' you tolle me wata de matter is," the old negress persisted, sitting down to the table opposite to the girl.

"I hardly know how to tell you, aunty," she said, after a few moments of thought.

"Don't be skeered now, chile, for to tell yer old aunty all 'bout it. I've lived a heap of years longer in dis world dan you have, an' p'haps I kin help yer out."

"Aunty, I am very miserable!" Lydia exclaimed, impulsively.

"Wata's come to yer, chile?" asked the old woman, in astonishment.

"Aunty, I want you to advise me what to do. I can speak freely to you, for you are the only friend that I have in the world. But for you I should have died in the snowbank where you found me in Boston. Perhaps it would have been better for me if you had needed my wish and left me to die, instead of bringing me here," the girl said, impulsively, tears standing in the large dark eyes, and a look of misery plainly written on her features.

"Why, chile!" cried the old woman, in horror, "you musn't talk dat way; dat's wicked, dat is! A young gal like you to want to die! Lordy! dat's ag'in' natur'. Now, honey, you musn't talk like dat ag'in'."

"But, aunty, I am so miserable," the girl rejoined, sadly.

"Wata's de matter, chile? Has yer quarreled wid yer young man?" asked the old woman, shrewdly.

A little red spot came into Lydia's pale cheeks, and she let her gaze rest on the floor for a moment.

"Why don't you say, chile? You ain't afraid to trust yer old aunty, are yer?"

"No, no," Lydia replied, quickly; "but how did you know that any gentleman was paying attentions to me?"

"Lordy, chile, the folks round hyer will talk, ye know."

"And do they say that any gentleman is paying attentions to me?"

"I specks they do; I heerd 'em."

"And who was the gentleman?"

"Dat Sinclair Paxton, honey, an' he ain't no poor white trash," the old woman said, emphatically.

For a few moments Lydia was silent; as she had suspected, Sinclair's attentions to her had been noticed, and already people had begun to couple their names together.

"And do they say that a rich man like Mr. Paxton thinks of marrying a poor girl like myself?" she asked.

"Yes, honey. Yer ain't had a quarrel wid him?"

"No, no, but it is to ask your advice in regard to Mr. Paxton that I came to see you to-night."

"Dat's right, honey; I'll do de best I kin for you," the old woman observed, encouragingly.

"Mr. Paxton has been very kind to me ever since I came to the mill; he is the treasurer there, you know?"

The old woman nodded.

"And he has told me that he loves me and that he wishes me to become his wife."

"Dat's wata I'd like to see, honey!" the old woman exclaimed, exultantly. "Fore de Lord! I'd walk a hundred miles fur to see dat!"

"But, aunty, suppose I can not be his wife?"

Dinah stared at her for a moment in astonishment.

"Why, chile? dat's wata I'd like to know?"

"He is a rich man while I am only a poor girl."

"Dat's nuffin'—dat don't count, nohow!"

"But, if there is another reason?" Lydia added, and then she hesitated as if undecided whether to go on or stop. Then with a sudden movement, she set her lips tight together for a moment and the look of hesitation vanished.

"Aunty, I must speak plainly with you, for you are the only one in this world to whom I can go for counsel. There is a reason why I should not marry Sinclair Paxton. There is a man living, who, if I married Mr. Paxton, would hold me absolutely in his power. I should be his slave, obliged to do his will, and if my husband by any chance should happen to discover my unhappy secret, he might drive me from him with curses—with loathing, and I should deserve to be so treated."

"Bress de Lord, chile!" exclaimed the old woman, in astonishment. "I don't understand dis yer."

"And I can not fully explain, except that there is a dark secret connected with my early life. It was that secret pressing on my brain and driving me almost to madness that made me seek death in the snowbank from which you rescued me. Now, aunty, I'll tell you what I came to ask. This man who possesses such a terrible hold upon me, knows of Mr. Paxton's love for me. He has offered that if I will give him a certain sum of money he will go away, so that I can marry Mr. Paxton, and promised that I shall never see him again. Now, aunty, is it right for me to do this—to marry this gentleman, knowing as I do, that if this man does not keep his word and should return, I doom both my husband and myself to a lifetime of misery?"

"An' can't you tell Mister Paxton all 'bout dis yer thing?" the old woman asked, thoughtfully.

"No; I can not tell him, for he knew my secret, our marriage would be impossible," Lydia replied, slowly.

"Don't you have nuffin' to do wid him, then, honey; dat ain't right; dat ain't corin' to de Good Book; don't you do it, chile!" the negress said, decidedly.

"That is what my own heart has told me a hundred times, but I am so weak, so irresolute, and this man loves me so well. When I am with him I think that I could dare every thing—risk all for his sake!" Lydia said, hurriedly and in strange excitement.

"Don't you do it, honey! Act fa'r an' square; dat's de only way to git along in dis yere world."

"You are right! He must forget me and I must forget him, and may Heaven give us both strength to bear our cross. Well, I must say good-by, aunty," and Lydia rose and put on her things. "I must go, now. I is getting dark, and it is a long way home."

"Come again soon, honey."

"Yes, yes," Lydia hurried away.

On her homeward walk she passed by the Paxton mansion. A single glance she gave at the house, almost hid by the gloom of the evening, and then hurried on again, her face as white and stony as the face of a marble statue.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DADDY EMBDEN'S GHOST.

When the buggy, driven by Nathan, drew up in front of the Embden mansion, the old man was so completely unnerved, that Nathan had to take him from the carriage as if he had been a child.

Delie led the old man into the sitting-room, placed him in an arm-chair, then in response to Nathan's beckoning hand, she came to the door which led into the hall where the hired man stood.

"What is the matter with father?" she asked, sorely troubled at the condition of the old man.

"Wal, Delie, it's hard to say," Nathan replied, slowly. "I drove up to the deacon's house, and got ther' jest about nine, jest as you told me. And arter I got there, I thought I had better go into the house and let your father know that I was there. So I got out of the wagon, and I walked into the yard. I tumbled over somethin' all curled into a heap on the ground. I thought first that it was some feller who had been drinking too much rum and had straggled into the deacon's yard to sleep it off. But when I come to examine, I found that it was your father. I got him into the buggy and he talked all the time as crazy as a bed-bug; I couldn't make head nor tail of it at first, but arter we drove on a spell, I found out that he thought that he had seen a ghost."

"A ghost!" cried the girl in wonder.

"Sartin! a ghost wrapped up in a mil'ta-

ry cloak and wearin' a straw hat."

"But did he see any thing?"

"Wal, now, furst off, I thought mebbe he had seen somebody passin' in the street, who looked like somebody that he

once knew, and who was dead. But arter we got over the bridge and was coming up the hill, he dropped down in a faint ag'in, and when I roused him out of it, he said that he had seen the ghost ag'in."

"But did you see any thing?"

"Not a thing; and when I found out what ailed him, I jumped right out of the buggy and went back, but I couldn't see any thing at all, except a couple of girls standing talkin' on a corner of the street."

"And do they say that a rich man like Mr. Paxton thinks of marrying a poor girl like myself?" she asked.

"Yes, honey. Yer ain't had a quarrel wid him?"

"No, no, but it is to ask your advice in regard to Mr. Paxton that I came to see you to-night."

"Dat's right, honey; I'll do best I kin for you," the old woman observed, encouragingly.

"Mr. Paxton has been very kind to me ever since I came to the mill; he is the treasurer there, you know?"

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"That is what my own heart has told me a hundred times, but I am so weak, so irresolute, and this man loves me so well. When I am with him I think that I could dare every thing—risk all for his sake!" Lydia said, hurriedly and in strange excitement.

"Oh, father, you are sick!" she said.

"No, I ain't sick," he muttered slowly, as with the aid of her arm, he tottered with unsteady steps, into the house. Nathan followed close behind.

Delie led the old man into the sitting-room, placed him in an arm-chair, then in response to Nathan's beckoning hand, she came to the door which led into the hall where the hired man stood.

"What is the matter with father?" she asked, sorely troubled at the condition of the old man.

"Wal, Delie, it's hard to say," Nathan replied, slowly. "I drove up to the deacon's house, and got ther' jest about nine, jest as you told me. And arter I got there, I thought I had better go into the house and let your father know that I was there. So I got out of the wagon, and I walked into the yard, mbebe, and I happened to raise my eyes and look out into the street over the gate, and there he stood, jest the other side of the gate. He was a-lookin' at me right straight at me—and his face was jest as pale as death, and his eyes they looked like great balls of fire. He never moved a mite, only stood and looked at me."

"Now, father, try and don't talk this way," and the girl smoothed back the bristly hair of the old man caressingly.

"I know you think I'm wrong; Nathan thought that I was crazy to-night when I said that I saw it on the

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Even the whites were held spell-bound with a species of wonder and horror, at sight of the wonderful monster with its glowing eyes and yawning mouth.

Some of them clutched their rifles as if to shoot the dragon, while detective Dart, as if under the influence of some horrible fascination, glided to the water's very edge, and leaning forward, supported by a bush, gazed with starting eyeballs at the creature.

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But just as he had turned the craft in a course at right-angles with that of the monster, the breast of the latter struck the side of the canoe. There was a crash, the side of the frail bark craft was stove in, and the next moment the savages were floundering in the water, while the monster, sinking glowering almost from view, glided away and was soon lost from the sight of our friends in the darkness along the shore.

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Be then tranquil as a dove;
Through these thunder-clouds above
Shines afar the heaven of love!
Never mind!"—TUPPER.

As Theophilus Onnorram hurried through a street not far from his own residence, his attention was attracted by a barouche that came swiftly along, with spirited horses chafing under a tight rein.

It was the one containing Hugh Winfield and Ilde Wyn.

We have seen that the Doctor was immediately struck with Ilde's resemblance to Zella Kearn, and, also, that he discovered Zella, by an accidental glance up at the third-story windows of the house directly opposite.

While considering what she could be doing there, he almost involuntarily crossed over and pulled the door-bell.

"I wish to see, Miss Kearn," he said, to the servant who appeared.

"Miss Kearn?" repeated the girl, inquiring.

"Yes—the young lady who occupies a third-story front room?"

"Oh, you mean the new boarder? Yes, sir. Walk in, please," and, ushering him into the parlor, she asked:

"What name shall I say, sir?"

"Um! well—just tell her that Doctor Onnorram would like to see her."

While the servant started on her errand up-stairs, the physician stood in the center of the parlor, stroking his smooth chin, and gazing thoughtfully down at the carpet.

"New boarder, eh? I wonder what that means. Zella Kearn generally goes to her aunt's when she comes to town—now she don't, and she's a boarder. A boarder?"

repeating the word as if it meant more than he could understand. "Rather queer, this. Wonder if she's alone? If yes, then what's she doing at a strange house?—a boarder—um! a boarder, too?"

It did seem that Heaven was unkind, in sending Hugh Winfield to Zella's gaze, when the unhappy girl had striven so hard to forget him, and to smother the gnawings of her rejected love.

It had cost her every effort of will she was capable of, to do what she had done—say good-by to all the dear scenes about her home—dear in themselves, though they reminded her bitterly of him to whose heart she had turned in vain.

It was but a sort of apathy, this new life among strangers—a life of trance amid surroundings that were drear.

The shapely head, drooping upon her arm, on the window sill, was trembling, as she sobbed; and she felt, in this fresh pain, as if existence was burdensome—as if she did not, and could never, care for anything.

She had a strong will; but there is no limit to the influences of an absorbing, passionate love—the most rigid hearts will melt, and resolutions of iron are overcome beneath its penetrating power.

All the determination to forget Hugh Winfield, which had been hers, now vanished, and left her with a bleeding heart, a weeping spirit—a being of veriest wretchedness, in atmospheres of woe.

"Oh, Hugh!—Hugh!" she moaned, "I thought you loved me! When you spoke, or in whatever you did, I thought—yes, I was sure I saw some sign of affection. You told me you did love me; but, is it true? Would you let me suffer in this way, if it was so?" but she added, after a second, as if she would not blame him:

"You don't know, though—you don't know; you'll never know, Hugh, what misery you have caused me—no—never!"

She raised her tearful eyes to look once again down the street.

But, the barouche was gone; only the busy, bustling throng met her straining gaze.

"Come," she said, after a moment, when the heaving bosom was forced to calmness, and her voice schooled to evenness.

"There's a gentleman in the parlor to see you, Miss," announced the girl, who entered.

"To see me?" in surprise; "who is it? What is his name?"

"He told me just to say, that Doctor Onnorram would like to see you."

"Doctor Onnorram" repeated Zella, in growing astonishment; and she asked herself: "How did he find out I was here? What can he want?"

Zella colored slightly. It certainly would not look proper to receive a visitor in her bedroom; yet she resolved to do this, as she did not wish to be seen by the boarders, several of whom were just then returning for dinner. Besides, the caller was a physician, and—

"I will receive him here," she replied, to the girl's question before she finished debating the point in her mind.

"Yes, Miss."

Doctor Onnorram was presently ushered in. He entered with a bow and a smile, rubbing his skinny hands together—a habit he had—and spoke in a pleasant tone.

"Miss Kearn—quite a surprise. How do you, to-day? Hope I see you well. Ah, yes—quite a surprise, indeed. I didn't expect to find you in the city—as a boarder, too."

"Be seated, Doctor. Are you well?"

"Always well—always well, thank you, my dear."

At first sound of her voice he detected sadness in it. He saw that she was pale, uneasy of manner, much unlike herself.

"I do not think you are in good health, my dear," he said, solicitously, appropriating a chair, and watching her closely.

Zella would not meet his gaze.

"Yes, Doctor, I am feeling very badly, I can not deny it—but, not exactly sick: I—indeed, I scarcely know what is the matter with me."

"You are decidedly sick. Permit me."

He slipped snakily from his chair, advanced, felt of her pulse, trying, while he held the white wrist, not to look grave.

"Um! Extraordinary nervousness. How long have you been in town?"

"Not long," answered Zella, after some hesitation.

"That's an evasion," thought Onnorram, watching her half-averted face. "Now what does she mean by that?" then aloud:

"Yesterday?—day before?—to-day?"

"Yesterday," reluctantly.

"Um! Yes. Let me prescribe for you,

my dear. Have you anybody here that you can send to the nearest apothecary?"

"Oh, it's of no consequence, Doctor, I—" "Tut! Tut! don't talk nonsense now. You are on the verge of hysterics, I see that plainly."

He stepped over to the bell-rope, despite her protestations; then, while he resumed his seat, and took out his diary to write, he inquired:

"Your father well?"

"Yes—I believe so."

He darted a momentary glance at her, over the spectacles, and commented mentally:

"That's another evasion. What's the matter with her? She's sombre as a ghost, and she used to be frolicsome as a kitten."

But he was completely baffled.

"Something wrong—something wrong, I must sift this."

After one of the servants had been despatched to the nearest drug-store, he set about trying to ascertain why she was there, exactly when she came, and what had caused the sudden change in her—transforming her from a merry, laughing girl, to a pale, saddened woman.

She evaded his questioning, with the readiness of female wit.

After doing his best, in vain, in a conversation of nearly two hours, he withdrew.

"Confound it!" he muttered, as he left the house, "I am no wiser for my labor. But I'll see her again to-morrow. I am determined to know what this means. Something wrong—I'll wager on it. Alas! she's a fine girl—very fine. She must be my wife, too, shortly. Yes, friend Kearn—marry the first to him who tried to win the widow whose first love died!" This little beauty must marry Theophilus Onnorram, or you'll never find out where your own child is—so help me cross-bones! Well, you young rascal—stop your screaming! Hear me?" the last to a ragged newsboy, with dirty face, who came running and screaming loudly, flourishing the evening paper.

"Buy one, sir?—full account of the strange death on the Bellefontaine Road."

"Death on the Bellefontaine, eh?" he stopped short, as he questioned, and looked sharply down at the urchin.

"Yes, sir. Big thing. Found dead; and full of blood. Heap of excitement, sir?"

"Yes—I'll read it," and as he received and paid for the paper, he was mumble: "Wonder what it is, now. Bellefontaine? That's pretty close. It might be that Kearn has—"

He was about to fold the journal up, and ram it into his pocket, when he felt a sudden prompting to look at the item of import.

It was on the first page, in display type, and he glanced carelessly at the account.

Immediately, however, he uttered a quick exclamation, his face assumed a rigid expression, and he half-crunched the paper in his grasp.

CHAPTER XX.

A TRIO OF SPIES.

We meet again when years have flown,
When time has wrought a wondrous change,
But do not meet as if unknown
In scenes of silence, awed and strange.—ANON.

BIG DAN stood, for a moment, before the entrance to the hallway leading to Doctor Onnorram's office.

Then he passed in—not like one calling on a matter of business, but in a way that would have excited the suspicions of a looker-on.

Inside the door, he paused, and drew off his boots—then he listened.

"Somethin' 's wrong," he muttered. "I don't know, though—you don't know; you'll never know, Hugh, what misery you have caused me—no—never!"

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"I know that tongue! I know that tongue!" she croaked.

"You wasn't blind when you an' me was last together—who am I?"

"I know you! I know you!" she said, by the slide, and reached one hand through to feel the fact that was peering in.

"Who am I?"

"It's Dan Cassar!" she said, quickly, and in a whisper. "Ho! how, come you to be here?"

"Yes, it's Dan Cassar."

"I remember you, Dan—why shouldn't I? Oho! I remember you well!"

"Hush!" raising a warning finger, "don't talk loud—don't talk loud. You've come in good time, Dan Cassar. Who sent you? How do you find old Beula?"

"Jest a kinder accident."

"Sh! listen; I am a prisoner—"

"I'll jest tump you out, then," he interrupted, "if I hev to b'ust the door down—

"You! no—no; I don't want to get out. See, Dan—I have no eyes now; I am a helpless old thing. My jailer takes good care of me—he! he! he! and he had best do so—" the last with a meaning chuckle. "I might as well die here as anywhere else. But I am afraid to die! I don't want to die yet! Dan Cassar, I am glad you found me. I want to tell you something—something very precious it is."

"What're you a pris'ner for?" he interro-

gated.

Her mouth twiched, and her fingers worked, as if some inward excitement was preying upon her.

"Onnorram, the Doctor, keeps me here."

"What for?"

"Sh! I not so loud. I'll tell you—is there anybody near?"

"No."

"Come into the room, Dan Cassar. The key is in the lock outside. Come in—come in."

Dan turned the key, and stepped into the apartment.

She led him to one side, where they could not be seen, in case some one should come to the slide in the panel, and motioned him to sit down.

The giant was filled with a sort of awe in her presence. He watched her, as he went across the room to draw up another chair—and he almost imagined he could see the well-remembered eyes as they had been wont to sparkle, when he met her, so many years before.

Beula was about to reveal something. He waited in silence.

JAMES JIGGERS, under the influence of the contents of his pocket-flask, was rocking unsteadily at his desk.

The pen had dropped from his hand, his head had sunk forward on his breast, and he finally settled down to a slumber of partial intoxication.

But, despite the extreme care which Cassar exercised in ascending the second flight of stairs, a creaking sound fell on the half-insensible hearing of the sleeper.

Under the circumstances—when his nerves were touchy, and his senses unsettled by the recent occurrence in which he figured—the effect was to rouse Jiggers with a start, and, blinking and ogling, he glanced toward the door of the adjoining room.

Presently, however, the creaking noise was repeated, and his head turned, like a ball on a pivot, toward the door leading to the entry.

MY SYLVAN SYLPH.

BY JOE JOT. JR.

I'll ne'er forget when first we met,
Full many a scented rose
Blown by the door in which she sat—
Industriously putting new heels in some old
woolen hose.

And I approached as in a dream,
Unconsciously and slow,
And, biess her, she did hasten out—
And made me that everlasting old bulldog let
go!

And oh, she had the sweetest voice!
My fond ear ever knew!
My memory seems to hear it yet—
In "Why, lawless alive, mister, how doo?"

I marvelled at her blushing hair
Which fell in many a coil,
And needed nothing in the world—
Except two or three handfuls of scented
beau's oil.

Yea, I saw her, and city belle
Made up of pride and lace—
She moved a queen about the house—
And stepped on the little blind kittens with
native grace.

I thought she was a fairy sprite
That walked upon the air,
Or trod like Venus on the wave—
And I could see the size of her shoes I
thought my grecs my rather fair.

She were a gentle winking smile—
Which trouble could not break,
Her eyes were full of tenderness—
And her mouth, which was none too small,
was generally pretty full of cake.

Her heart, so good, was ever warm
With love for all her kind,
I knew it when she softly said—
"Alabamias, go chase those piggies out and
don't you hurt them, mind!"

She slept when first we met,
But I adored her still—
And one can calculate her worth—
Her everlasting old father hasn't taken a
notion yet to get sick and make his will.

A Woman's Scheme.
A SKETCH OF CITY LIFE.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

One cool night in October, during the present lustrum, "Daring Val," one of the boldest, and consequently most noted cracksmen of New York, leaned over the counter of a low underground "thieves' treat," scanning the "Personals" of a prominent city journal.

This man had committed more burglaries than any two thieves then in the city, and the papers, uttering the sentiments of the law-abiding citizens, clamored loudly for his apprehension. But he adroitly eluded the police, and continued to pursue his nefarious calling in their very faces.

It was rumored, and rightly, too, as our story will show, that "Daring Val," as the burglar was called by everybody, had been employed by wealthy persons to carry out their petty revenge, and was still in the employ of scheming men and women.

The cracksmen's eyes ran down the "Personal column," upon the October night above written, until they suddenly rested upon the following advertisement, which struck him very forcibly:

"PERSONAL. Will the gentleman, with the gold anchor, who sat opposite the lady in green silk in the —— avenue cars, yesterday, please call at No. —— Fourth avenue, between the hours of seven and nine to-night?"

The burglar read the advertisement twice before he uttered a word.

"Why, that must mean me," he said, slightly above a whisper. "I was dressed in my best, yesterday, and sported a gold anchor, and rode in the —— avenue cars, opposite the lady in green silk. How she eyed me then! Her garments told me she was in good circumstances, although they bore marks of long wear. Yes," after a long pause, "I'll go and see what she wants of Val Rettick. It's about six now."

The adroit scoundrel folded the paper and walked leisurely from the den.

Twenty minutes later he reappeared, attired in a suit of broadcloth, fashionably cut. His mass of raven hair betrayed the presence of an oleaginous compound, and a heavy gold chain, from which dangled the anchor which had attracted the attention of "the lady in green," contrasted glitteringly with his white vest.

He stepped to the bar, and after emptying a wine-glass with a single gulp, he strode from the apartment, imitating a dandy's gait, to the amusement of several criminal companions.

Once upon the street, he entered a car, and presently stood beneath the particular number on Fourth avenue designated by the "personal."

He rung the bell with the air of a refined gentleman, which he could admirably counterfeit, and was ushered into the richest appointed parlor he had ever entered.

After bestowing a look upon several superb pictures that adorned the walls, the dandy burglar threw himself upon a rich sofa, and toyed with his chain, until the rustle of silk saluted his ears.

A moment later the door opened, and a beautiful woman, attired in green silk, heavily flounced, swept into the apartment.

The recognition was mutual.

The lady glanced at Rettick's "gold anchor," and smilingly complimented him for answering her "personal" so promptly.

"I know you, sir," she said, after a brief exchange of words. "You are daring Val Rettick, the burglar, and, sir, I advertised to tell you that I have work for you—work that, if well performed, will fill your pockets with greenbacks."

"I am ever ready to work for those who pay without stint," answered Val. "And I would be pleased to know what I have to do in this case. The greater the risk, the better the reward."

The woman in green smiled, and drew nearer the thief.

"My uncle," she said, in a low tone, "lies upon the point of death. He is rich—will leave a cool hundred thousand behind him. Years ago, when I was a little girl and an orphan, he took me to his home, and proclaimed me the heiress to his wealth. I dwelt in peace with him until two years ago, when, in a fit of anger, of which I, unavoidably, was the remote cause, he drove me from his roof, and took a beggar to his hearth, whom he now calls his heiress."

"I am satisfied," she continued, "that the will he once drew up bequeathed his all to me, for he is childless, is destroyed, and that a new one lies beyond the insecure doors of his old cabinet. I want that will. With it in my power, I can make Violet Fortney a beggar indeed, and become mistress of the situation again. What sum do you demand for the work?"

"Describe the work,"

The lady did so.

"I will disguise myself in plain garments, and await you on the pavement, near the alley," she continued.

"Well," said Rettick, "I accept your aid, and, in consideration of the neat sum of five thousand dollars, shall complete the work to your satisfaction."

The woman agreed to pay the sum demanded, and the following night was selected for the dark work.

Val Rettick took his leave.

Julia Coleman felt her uncle's will within her grasp.

She paced the room with a triumphant and self-satisfied air, picturing to herself Violet Fortney's reverse of fortune.

It was her fault that she did not fill Violet's place, at that hour, beside the bed of her dying uncle.

William Coleman loved his niece until her pride and stubbornness compelled him to drive her from his presence.

The ambitious girl became fascinated by a sudden arrival—a handsome fellow, with foreign airs, who called himself Count La Boyteaux. In vain the old man tried to persuade Julia that the dandy was a heartless adventurer. She hung upon his footsteps, and one night, having yielded to the villain's blandishments—having made her self his slave—she attempted to rob her master; but was detected by the old man.

Then, finding his niece beyond reformation, Willard Coleman, with tears in his eyes for his brother's memory, drove her from his house, and resolved to try and forget her.

Several nights later a poor sewing-machine girl saved him from several villains who were dogging his steps, and, to reward her, he took her to his luxuriant home, and thus Violet Fortney became the old man's heiress.

As the reader has seen, Julia told Daring Val quite a different story from the foregoing.

Soon La Boyteaux deserted his deluded victim, and she entered the house of a wealthy merchant as a governess, resolving to bide her time for revenge.

The city clocks were proclaiming the hour of eleven upon the night following the interview between the fair employer and

the chief officers were congratulating themselves upon the efficacy of their arrangements, by which all predators were set at defiance, when suddenly the shock came, dissipating these fond expectations to the four winds.

Early one morning, while leisurely sipping his coffee, the president, who was generally at the bank first of all, was aroused by the sharp clatter of horse's hoofs upon the gravelled walk outside, and



A WOMAN'S SCHEME.

Recollections of the West.

"Foxing" for Burglars.

BY CAPT. "BRUIN" ADAMS.

ONLY those who were in San Francisco in the early days, actually on the ground and observers of what took place, can have any true conception of the extent to which lawlessness and crime were carried.

Vigilance committees were promptly organized, but in very many cases their efforts were paralyzed by some traitor in their midst giving early information to suspected parties, or warning those already known as guilty in time for them to escape the doom that awaited them.

Such was the condition of affairs in that city when the Merchants' and Mechanics' Bank was first opened. The strong stone building stood near the center of a row of substantial business houses on the principal thoroughfare, and with its barred and heavily-shuttered windows, and massive double-door, it was considered impregnable, no matter how determined or skillful might be the efforts of those seeking to enter in any other than the proper way. Besides these safeguards the usual night watchman was always locked in, and then nothing more could be done—at least, so it was thought.

For several months the affairs of the bank progressed smoothly. The officers and *attaches*, among whom was myself, as assistant book-keeper, fell into the usual groove of banking work, and up to the time of which I am about to speak, nothing had occurred to break its monotony.

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